

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A cellulose ether blend comprising:

- a) cellulose ether,
- b) from 0.1 to 10% by weight of an additive selected from the group consisting of starch, starch ether, guar, guar ether and xanthan, based on the cellulose ether in a dry form,
- c) from 0.05 to 1% by weight of polyacrylamide, based on the dry cellulose ether, said polyacrylamide being an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C), and

d) optionally further additives,

wherein said cellulose ether blend is prepared by a process comprising, metering-in additive b) as an aqueous solution or as a powder, metering-in polyacrylamide c) as an aqueous solution to form a water-moist cellulose ether having a moisture content in the range from 25% to 75% by weight, based on the weight of the moist cellulose ether,

mixing (a), (b), (c) and (d),

optionally further adding water, and

simultaneously milling and drying the cellulose ether blend,

further wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 40 g/l greater than the bulk density of a comparative cellulose ether blend prepared by the same process with the exception that the comparative process does not include the step of simultaneously milling and drying ~~mixing in the absence of milling, said comparative cellulose ether blend comprising components (a), (b), (c) and (d) in amounts equivalent to said cellulose ether blend.~~

2. (Previously presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein the cellulose ether is methyl cellulose or methylhydroxyalkyl cellulose.

3. (Previously presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein the additive b) has been metered in as a powder.

3. (New)

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously presented) The cellulose ether blend of Claim 1, wherein a starch ether selected from the group consisting of hydroxyalkyl starch, alkylhydroxyalkyl starch and carboxymethylhydroxyalkyl starch is used as additive b).

6. (New) A cellulose ether blend comprising:

- a) cellulose ether,
- b) from 1 to 10% by weight of an additive selected from the group consisting of starch, starch ether, guar, guar ether and xanthan, based on the cellulose ether in a dry form,
- c) water and

wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is at least 254 g/l.

7. (New) A cellulose ether blend comprising:

- a) cellulose ether,
- b) from 0.5 to 8% by weight of an additive selected from the group consisting of starch, starch ether, guar, guar ether and xanthan, based on the cellulose ether in a dry form,
- c) from 0.05 to 1% by weight of polyacrylamide, based on the dry cellulose ether, said polyacrylamide being an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C),
- d) water and

wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is at least 253 g/l.

8. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 6, wherein said additive is present in an amount from 1 to 8% by weight.

9. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 6, wherein said additive is present in an amount from 1 to 5% by weight, said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density from 253 g/l to 353 g/l.
10. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 8, wherein additive b) is from 1.5 to 2.5% by weight.
11. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 6, which further comprises c) from 0.05 to 1% by weight of polyacrylamide, based on the dry cellulose ether, said polyacrylamide being an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C).
12. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 10, which further comprises c) from 0.05 to 1% by weight of polyacrylamide, based on the dry cellulose ether, said polyacrylamide being an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C).
13. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 11, wherein said polyacrylamide c) is from 0.1 to 0.6% by weight.
14. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 12, wherein said polyacrylamide c) is from 0.1 to 0.6% by weight.
15. A process for the production of a cellulose ether blend which comprises metering in an additive (b) as an aqueous solution or as a powder into a) cellulose ether to form a water-moist cellulose ether having a moisture content in the range from 25% to 75% by weight, based on the weight of the moist cellulose ether, and

simultaneously milling and drying the cellulose ether blend
wherein said additive b) is

from 0.5 to 10% by weight of an additive selected from the group consisting of starch, starch ether, guar, guar ether and xanthan, based on the cellulose ether in a dry form and wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 40 g/l greater than the bulk density of a comparative cellulose ether blend wherein the comparative cellulose ether blend is made by the same process with the exception that the comparative process does not include the step of simultaneously milling and drying.

16. (New) The process as claimed in claim 15, which further comprises metering-in polyacrylamide c) as an aqueous solution to form a water-moist cellulose ether having a moisture content in the range from 25% to 75% by weight, based on the weight of the moist cellulose ether,

mixing (a), (b) and (c),

wherein said polyacrylamide is present in an amount from 0.05 to 1% by weight based on the dry cellulose ether, said polyacrylamide being an anionic polyacrylamide having a sodium acrylate content of less than 20% by weight and a viscosity of less than 1000 mPas (as determined under conditions of 1% strength by weight in 10% strength by weight sodium chloride solution, at a temperature of 25°C)

and wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 60 g/l greater than the bulk density of a comparative cellulose ether blend wherein the comparative cellulose ether blend is made by the same process with the exception that the comparative process does not include the step of simultaneously milling and drying.

17. (New) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein said additive b) is present from 1 to 8% by weight and wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is at least 253 g/l.

18. (New) The process as claimed in claim 16, wherein said additive b) is present from 1 to 8% by weight and wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is from 253 g/l to 353 g/l.

19. (New) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein said additive b) is from 1.5 to 2.5% by weight.

20. (New) The process as claimed in claim 18, wherein said additive b) is from 1.5 to 2.5% by weight.

21. (New) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 80 g/l greater than the bulk density of the comparative cellulose ether blend wherein the comparative cellulose ether blend is made by the same process with the exception that the comparative process does not include the step of simultaneously milling and drying.

22. (New) The process as claimed in claim 20, wherein said cellulose ether blend has a bulk density that is more than 80 g/l greater than the bulk density of the comparative cellulose ether blend wherein the comparative cellulose ether blend is made by the same process with the exception that the comparative process does not include the step of simultaneously milling and drying.

23. (New) The process as claimed in claim 15, wherein said cellulose ether blend has a moisture content in the range from 45% to 65% by weight.

24. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 6, wherein said cellulose ether blend has a moisture content in the range from 45% to 65% by weight.

25. (New) The cellulose ether blend as claimed in claim 6, wherein said cellulose ether blend has a moisture content in the range from 45% to 65% by weight.